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Curriculum Ideas for Teachers

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Ministry of Education

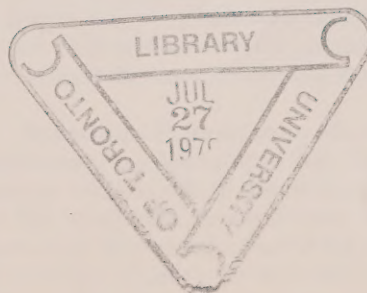
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Using Media in the ESL/D Program

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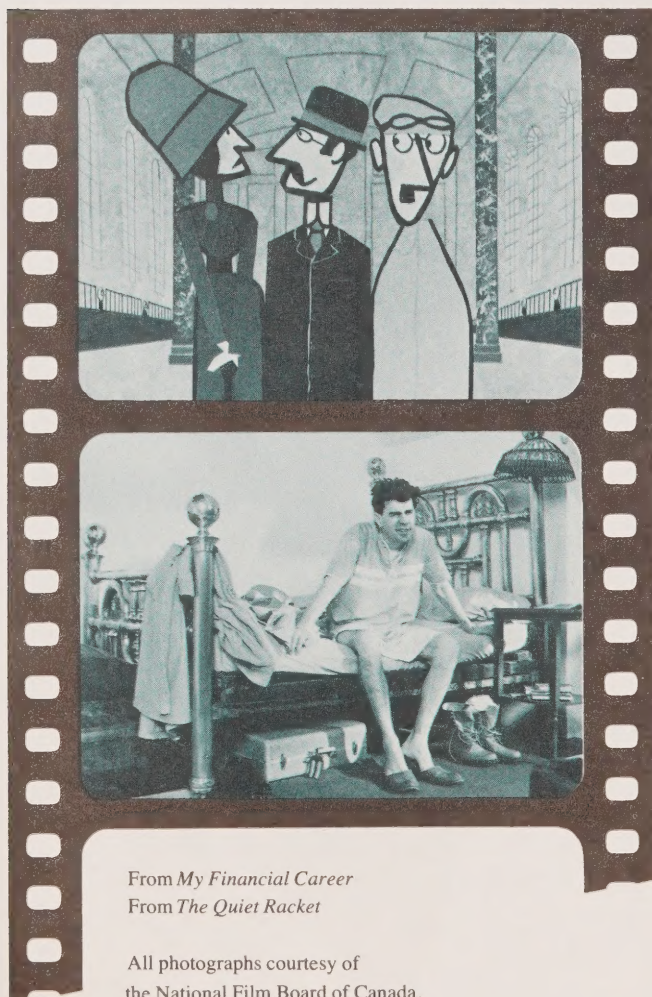
Using Media in the ESL/D Program





Introduction

The purpose of this document is to describe several types of visual materials that are particularly useful in meeting many of the objectives of ESL/D programs in the Intermediate and Senior divisions. Although reference is made to picture collections, 35 mm slides, filmstrips, and videotapes, the major part of this document is intended to outline a general procedure for using 16 mm films.



From *My Financial Career*
From *The Quiet Racket*

All photographs courtesy of
the National Film Board of Canada.

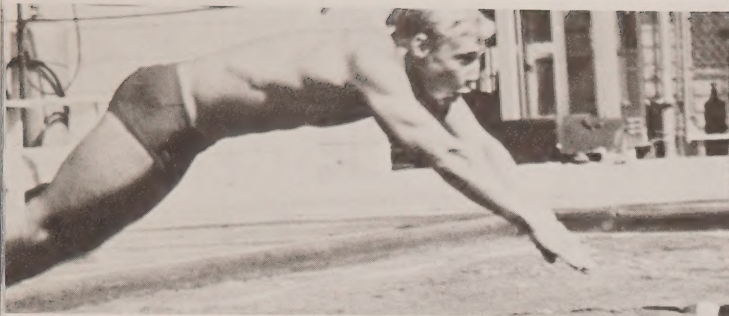
The Materials

1. Picture collections and 35 mm slides. Although excellent picture sets are available commercially, your own collection will probably be of more value in the program. Suitable pictures can be obtained from such sources as magazines, newspapers, posters, and personal collections. However, pictures smaller than 31 cm × 21 cm should not be considered for small-group work.

Pictures are most useful when they have been mounted on cardboard backing and laminated with plastic; if they are prepared in this way, frequent handling will not cause substantial damage. They should be classified and stored in vertical files for easy access. Students can then work individually or in small groups and can answer questions that have been typed or printed under the pictures (e.g., What is happening in this picture? What do you think happened before? What might happen next?).

Although the preparation required before 35 mm slides can be used may be greater than when pictures are used, the visual impact of slides usually makes such preparation worth while. As with sets of pictures, slides may be grouped or regrouped by students, either from a preselected or a randomly selected pool, to form a sequence. A host of language activities involving either oral or written expression — for example, the writing of captions and descriptions, and predictions of “what happens next” — can be developed from these materials. Slides are highly motivating and provide a stimulating break from some of the more routine undertakings of the class.

2. Kits and filmstrips. A very wide array of materials in kit form is commercially available. The materials may range from a couple of sound filmstrips to a large “culture box” of clothing, books, coins, musical instruments, implements, and other items from another country. As a general rule, the greater the number of stimuli provided in the collection, the greater will be the usefulness of the kit to the ESL/D program, provided that the teacher has carefully planned the sequence of activities that such materials can stimulate. As with pictures and 35 mm slides, interesting kits can be assembled by the teacher and students and exchanges of materials arranged with other classes and schools.



Filmstrips seem best suited for individual use. Those that have captions require facility in reading English; those that are accompanied by an audio tape require a great deal of ability with spoken language. If you wish to use filmstrips with a group, the subjects that lend themselves best to discussion or description are animals of various kinds and studies of other cultures or societies.

3. Videotapes. At the Intermediate and Senior levels, most of the videotape material available through the Videotape Program Service (VIPS) of OECA* contains a great deal of narration or dialogue. For this reason, the most effective use of these resources will be with students who are already functioning at a fairly advanced level. There are a number of excellent series available. Tom Grattan's *War*, for example, can provide absolutely first-rate language-learning opportunities in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

One of the great advantages of the videotape format is that it allows students to become involved in making their own programs. As well as being highly motivational, videotaping promotes conversation and discussion in an informal atmosphere.

4. Film. Films should be regarded as providing motivation for language development and the content from which language interaction proceeds. Although reference is made in this section to specific films, you should note that many of the language activities suggested can be carried out using alternative films and you should substitute other available films for those suggested, whenever appropriate.

There are many ways of classifying 16 mm film, but probably the most useful for the purposes of an ESL/D program is by making a distinction between *narrated* and *non-narrated* films. The narrated film has, as its designation implies, a sound track that carries a narration of the events or actions portrayed, or a dialogue of some sort, spoken by the characters on the screen. Although there are many films that can be used with students at any level of language ability, many narrated films are too difficult for any but the most advanced students to comprehend. Non-narrated films, on the other hand, usually have sound effects or music on the sound track, but have no spoken language for the student to contend with. As a rule, films of this kind are very strong visually, their meaning transcending the barriers of language, so that every student emerges from the viewing experience with a high degree of understanding.

General Principles for Using Film

In the use of *any* film, there are a number of procedures that, if adhered to, will lead to successful and enjoyable viewing experiences for ESL/D students.

- 1. Know the film.** You should have a thorough knowledge of the film to be used. Catalogue descriptions, no matter how accurate, cannot possibly provide sufficient information about the film's contents and treatment to allow you to determine which language skills may be developed through it.
- 2. Plan.** Having previewed the film, you can plan the learning sequence that you hope to be able to set in motion as a result of using the film. Most non-narrated films can be viewed profitably several times, particularly in an ESL/D class.

Students should be motivated before the initial viewing so that they may respond to the experience later. In the case of students who are operating on a basic level, this response would likely consist of answering factual questions about the film such as "How many people did you see?", "What were they doing?", "What were they wearing?". More advanced students may be asked to make comparisons, express their feelings, state their opinions, draw conclusions, and make inferences.

3. Use the film. Students may be encouraged to develop several narrations as well as dialogues and conversations to use with the films in subsequent viewings. Since the projector usually makes a considerable noise, a tape recorder should be used as a P.A. system in order to amplify the student's voice. This can be done on reel-to-reel machines, but very few cassette recorders have this facility, although some are now being marketed that are suitable for this purpose.

The process of narration is an excellent means of developing language: for example, verb-tense awareness and oral-language skills. In narration students use a controlled vocabulary; they can also gain practice in using various tenses by being given an opportunity to repeat the narration in present, present continuous, past, perfect, and other tenses. At your discretion, this narration may be done orally or may form the basis for a writing activity.

4. Follow-up. There are many stimulating activities that may be used as a follow-up to film viewing. Precisely which ones are selected will, of course, depend upon the nature of the film being used, but usually these activities will include discussion; dramatization; searching in books for additional information; inviting a visitor to the school; taking a field trip; writing letters, advertisements, or poems; learning Canadian expressions; making a speech; and making a model.

*Ontario Educational Communications Authority. Further information is available from OECA, P.O. Box 200, Station Q, Toronto M4T 2T1.



Some Suggestions for Specific Units

The following are a number of suggestions for units that might be developed around selected non-narrated or sparsely narrated films. Each description is brief and is intended to convey information and direction rather than to provide a minutely detailed analysis of the process to be used. It is hoped that the ideas will be seminal, providing a framework of thought upon which you may build a variety of workable study situations for your students. A list of all of the films mentioned and their distributors is to be found at the end of this document.

1. Seasons. A study centred around a particular season of the year presents a natural means of capitalizing on the students' interests and of providing them with language that is immediate and practical.

a) *Fall.* The film *Autumn Comes to the City*, focusing on eleven- and twelve-year-olds, provides a useful lead-in to a discussion of the changes in an urban setting that are related to the changing seasons. This can be followed by:

- a study of the climate in other countries and in the southern hemisphere;
- a discussion of autumn holidays in Canada and abroad;
- a study of rural autumn activities;
- a visit to a farm in autumn;
- a visit to a winery or canning factory;
- the viewing of *Autumn: Frost Country* with advanced students and the subsequent reading of some of Robert Frost's poetry;
- the writing of poems;
- the collection and identification of leaves from Ontario trees;
- the viewing of the film *Flyway North*, which deals with the migration of snow geese. The surprise ending of this film could stimulate a discussion of and debates on conservation, hunting, and other such topics, and could provide opportunities for reading and writing.

b) *Winter.* An excellent jumping-off point for a winter unit is the film *The Ride*. This slapstick toboggan ride is bound to tickle the fancy of all students and will withstand repeated viewings. It leads quite naturally into a discussion of winter sports and of Canadian humour. It can be followed by:

- a visit to a toboggan hill, with speaking and writing activities as follow-up;
- the viewing of *Ski de Fond*, followed by a cross-country skiing or snowshoeing excursion;
- the taking of photographs with instant cameras; captions or written accounts can then be added;

— a discussion of travel in winter. The film *Snow* is a beautiful mood piece about trains in Britain. All students should be encouraged to talk about their feelings after viewing this film. They will also benefit from describing the action and narrating the voice-over;

— a discussion of winter clothing and a comparison of Canadian needs in this area to those of other countries;

— a discussion of the effects of the Canadian winter on our history and pattern of settlement;

— listening to, studying, and learning some songs by Gilles Vigneault;

— making picture collections and writing captions for the pictures;

— a discussion of winter holidays;

— the learning of Christmas carols;

— the viewing of *Ski Fever* and *Ski: The Outer Limits*.

These are highly stimulating films that provide almost unlimited stimulus for narration, discussing cause and effect, describing events and feelings, relating personal experiences, and reading and writing activities.

c) *Spring and summer.* A list of activities similar to those outlined above may be developed from films such as the following:

— *Rainshower*

— *Spring in the City*

— *Get Wet*. This is a survey of water sports. Try running this film backwards and have the students describe their reactions.

— *Summer Mosaic*. This film presents visual impressions of a city in summer, focusing mainly on people in the parks.

— *The Quiet Racket*. The attempts of a city-dweller to escape the heat and noise of the city lead him into a series of misadventures and noise in the countryside. Students may make tape recordings of familiar noises for others to identify as a follow-up to this film. Sound-effects records can provide an alternative source of sound for this activity.



2. Films that tell a story. Many superb narrative films are available. These provide opportunities for students to describe characters, moods, settings, or plots. The projector may be stopped at strategic points in the story so that students may hypothesize on what is going to happen next. At the conclusion of the initial viewing, they may be asked to give their impressions of the story and to compare the actual unfolding of events with their hypotheses. The degree to which the students can express their feelings and opinions will depend, of course, on their level of fluency in English. Some good films for this type of activity are:

– *The Stringbean*. A lonely old Parisian woman lavishes affection on a bean plant in a park. Her trips to the park take her from the sombre shadows of her tiny room to the sunny, colourful park.

– *Drylanders*. This is an account of the epic struggle of settlers in Western Canada from early in the twentieth century until just before the Second World War. The film has been specially cut into segments, with a brief summary of the preceding episode at the beginning of each segment. This film with dialogue is suitable for secondary school students with a reasonable grasp of English. It is particularly good for helping students develop research skills.

– *The Hand*. This beautiful Czech puppet animation tells the tale of an artist who prefers his mundane work to a grandiose work commissioned by the government, even though the choice costs him his life. This is an excellent film for discussion.

– *Baggage*. In this allegory of escape, done in mime, a young woman seeks release from a heavy burden. She is unsuccessful, until a sudden brutal moment brings fulfilment.

The following films offer superb incentives for a host of language activities. Since they deal with eggs, chicks, and hens, a classroom incubator is most useful. Science departments or co-ordinators should be able to supply you with a small, functional incubator, or with plans for building one. (Note: The construction of an incubator requires rigorous attention to detail and a good-quality, reliable thermostat. A malfunction during the incubation period can have disastrous results and may quench all enthusiasm. Be careful.)

– *Chicks and Chickens*. This film looks at the barnyard behaviour of a hen with her young chicks.

– *Overture Nyitany*. Through the process of photomicroscopy, this film looks at the development of a chick from the fetal stage to hatching, all to the accompaniment of Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*. This is probably one of the most beautiful short films ever made, and although it is now out of print, copies may be available in local film libraries.

– *Peep Show*. This animated film deals with the adventures of a chick.

From these or other similar films you could lead the students on an exploration of the English idiomatic expressions that involve poultry ("chicken", "scarce as hen's teeth", "like water off a duck's back", and so on). From here, it is a natural step to the examination of expressions involving other animals. Some delightful films for this purpose are:

– *Pigs*. This film contains all kinds, shapes, sizes, and colours of pigs, doing what pigs do. It includes graphic illustrations of "eat like a pig", "pig's eye", "happy as a pig in mud", and so on.

– *Sheep, Sheep, Sheep*

– *The Cow*

– *Horsing Around*

If you wish to have students pursue a different direction from this point, it is a small step from the real world of work horses to the world of fantasy, and it is a step most students are eager to take. One might begin the transition with *The Happy Pace of Switzerland*, in which a horse pulls a riderless buggy through scenic Switzerland to the accompaniment of a Rossini air. The viewer becomes the rider. *Dream of the Wild Horses* is a surrealistic portrait of the horses of the swamps at the mouth of the Rhône River in France. *Carousel* is a gentle fantasy in which the horses of a merry-go-round escape their endless circle to run free. There are many films of this type that are beautifully suited to the expression of feelings, orally or in prose or poetry.

3. Myths and legends. Almost every culture has a rich heritage of myths and legends which may be exploited for language learning by Intermediate and Senior students. *The Loon's Necklace* is a good film to initiate thinking about how people explain to themselves the phenomena of the world around them. Students may begin by retelling the tale individually; then they should be encouraged to share their individual versions with one another. Next, they could record, first on tape and then on paper, some of the myths and legends of their parents' cultures.

4. Other people, other places, other times. This is a mammoth topic, which may be considered periodically during the school year to provide interest and variety to the program. *Multiple Man* is a film that looks at the faces and activities of people in all parts of the world. A slice-of-life examination of a number of different cultures can be found in the *Man and His World* series. *A Time Out of War* takes the students back to the American Civil War and provides opportunities to discuss current issues. *Age of the Buffalo* offers, through paintings of an era, a poignant commentary on the treatment of Native peoples on the Great Plains. *Corral* takes place in the same area, but deals with a modern cowboy who ropes and rides a partially broken horse.



5. Humour and satire. Some of the best of the short, non-narrated films deal with the penchant humans have for getting into trouble, or for getting others into trouble. Almost any of the following films could be chosen to initiate spirited discussion on some moral point or other:

- *The Hat: Is This War Necessary?*
- *The Trendsetter*. How do you deal with mimics?
- *Bags*. The cycle of oppressor to hero and back to oppressor is examined.
- *Ark*. Envy, greed, and wanton destruction are examined.
- *Neighbours*. Hostility between neighbours escalates.
- *The Satiric Eye*. Several vignettes are included in this one film.
- *No Arks*. This is a narrated account of Noah's ark and a similar but oriental one.
- *Eggs*. Overpopulation is the topic.

For a particularly light touch, the following films are recommended. They are extremely useful for investigating the things that make people laugh.

- *The Violinist*. On the hazards of accepting advice.
- *A Chairy Tale*. On love and understanding.
- *Le Petit Bonheur*. On comforting babies.
- *What on Earth?* On how we might look to Martians.
- *The Great Toy Robbery*. The antihero's hero.
- *The Rise and Fall of the Great Lakes*. Geology with a vengeance.
- *My Financial Career*. Leacock's famous story. Students should follow up this film by reading the story.

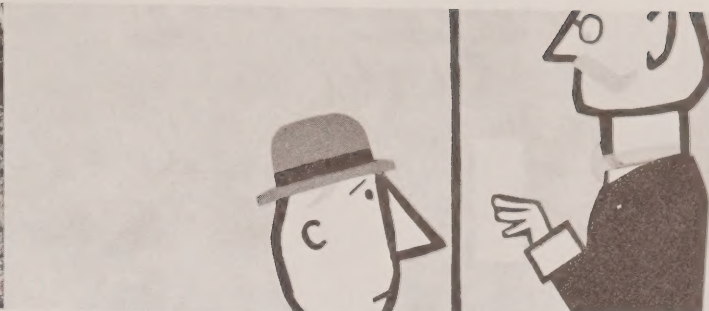
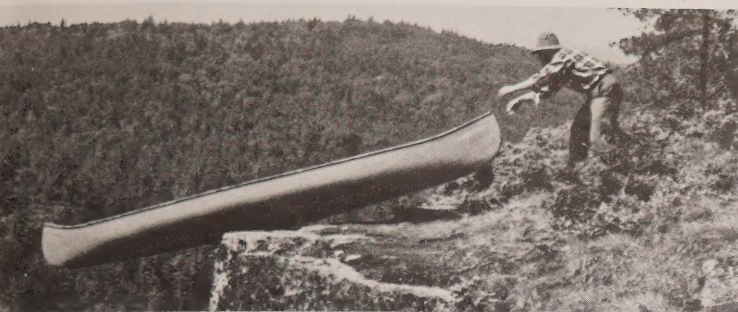
Note: Many of the films in this last group contain dialogue, but in most cases it is sparse and the visuals carry the message quite well.

As already indicated, this document is not exhaustive. It is hoped, however, that the *range* of possibilities has been clearly outlined, and that teachers will attempt to develop a series of language-learning experiences for their students from this core of ideas.

Films are a kind of magic carpet, whisking viewers on a cone of light into a universe of fantasy and fun, of sombre thought, or of exhilarating emotion. Through careful planning, teachers can help their students to make these journeys often, and can help them gain the English skills required to express, in a variety of ways, what has been seen, heard, and experienced.

Films and Canadian Distributors

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>Age of the Buffalo</i> | NFB, 1964. 16 mm, colour, 14 min. |
| 2. <i>Ark</i> | Film Group 1 of Michigan, 1970. 16 mm, colour, 20 min. Distributed by Marlin. |
| 3. <i>Autumn Comes to the City</i> | Crawley Films, 1971. 16 mm, colour, 11 min. Distributed by Cor. |
| 4. <i>Autumn: Frost Country</i> | Pyramid Film Producers, 1969. 16 mm, colour, 9 min. Distributed by HRW. |
| 5. <i>Baggage</i> | ACI Productions, 1969. 16 mm, b/w, 22 min. Distributed by Marlin. |
| 6. <i>Bags</i> | Pyramid, 1967. 16 mm, 10 min. Distributed by ITE. |
| 7. <i>Carousel</i> | NFB, 1970. 16 mm, colour, 10 min. |
| 8. <i>A Chairy Tale</i> | NFB, 1957. 16 mm, b/w, 10 min. |
| 9. <i>Chicks and Chickens</i> | Films, Inc., 1969. 16 mm, colour, 10 min. Distributed by VEC. |
| 10. <i>Corral</i> | NFB, 1954. 16 mm, b/w, 11 min. |
| 11. <i>The Cow</i> | Dimension Films, 1968. 16 mm, colour, 13 min. Distributed by G. Watt. |
| 12. <i>Dream of the Wild Horses</i> | Phoenix Films, 1960. 16 mm, colour, 9 min. Distributed by ITE. |
| 13. <i>Drylanders</i> | NFB, 1964. 16 mm, b/w, available in 4 segments of 20 min each. |
| 14. <i>Eggs</i> | Hubley Studio Film, 1972. 16 mm, colour, 10 min. Distributed by Marlin. |
| 15. <i>Flyway North</i> | NFB, 1964. 16 mm, colour, 11 min. |
| 16. <i>Get Wet</i> | NFB, 1966. 16 mm, colour, 8 min. |



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| 17. <i>The Great Toy Robbery</i> | NFB, 1964. 16 mm, colour, 7 min. | 34. <i>The Ride</i> | NFB, 1968. 16 mm, colour, 7 min. |
| 18. <i>The Hand</i> | Harry Belafonte, 1967. 16 mm, colour, 20 min. Distributed by McG-H. | 35. <i>The Rise and Fall of the Great Lakes</i> | NFB, 1968. 16 mm, colour, 7 min. |
| 19. <i>The Happy Pace of Switzerland</i> | Swiss National Tourist Office, 1963. 16 mm, colour, 11 min. Distributed by EFD. | 36. <i>The Satiric Eye</i> | Learning Corporation of America, 1971. 16 mm, colour, 13 min. Distributed by Marlin. |
| 20. <i>The Hat: Is This War Necessary?</i> | McG-H, 1967. 16 mm, colour, 18 min. | 37. <i>Sheep, Sheep, Sheep</i> | Dimension Films, 1970. 16 mm, colour, 11 min. Distributed by G. Watt. |
| 21. <i>Horsing Around</i> | NFB, 1973. 16 mm, colour, 8 min. | 38. <i>Ski de Fond</i> | NFB, 1970. 16 mm, colour, 6 min. |
| 22. <i>The Loon's Necklace</i> | Imperial Oil Ltd., 1950. 16 mm, colour, 11 min. Distributed by NFB. | 39. <i>Ski Fever</i> | HRW, 1971. 16 mm, colour, 9 min. |
| 23. <i>Man and His World</i> | VEC, 1970. 16 mm, colour, 46 short films. | 40. <i>Ski: The Outer Limits</i> | Pyramid Films, 1965. 16 mm, colour, 25 min. Distributed by ITE. |
| 24. <i>Multiple Man</i> | NFB, 1969. 16 mm, colour, 16 min. | 41. <i>Snow</i> | Canadian Learning Corporation, ACI Productions, 1969. 16 mm, colour, 10 min. |
| 25. <i>My Financial Career</i> | NFB, 1962. 16 mm, colour, 7 min. | 42. <i>Spring in the City</i> | Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1969. 16 mm, colour, 10 min. Distributed by Cor. |
| 26. <i>Neighbours</i> | NFB, 1952. 16 mm, colour, 8 min. | 43. <i>The Stringbean</i> | A. P. Claudon-CAPAC Productions, 1965. 16 mm, colour, 15 min. Distributed by McG-H. |
| 27. <i>No Arks</i> | British Film Institute, 1971. 16 mm, colour, 11 min. Distributed by VEC. | 44. <i>Summer Mosaic</i> | Viking. Insight Productions Ltd., 1971. 16 mm, colour, 9 min. |
| 28. <i>Overture Nyitany</i> (out of print) | Mafilm Studios, 1965. 16 mm, colour, 9 min. Distributed by McG-H. | 45. <i>A Time Out of War</i> | Pyramid, 1954. 16 mm, b/w, 22 min. Distributed by ITE. |
| 29. <i>Peep Show</i> | NFB, 1962. 16 mm, b/w, 9 min. | 46. <i>The Trendsetter</i> | Pyramid, 1971. 16 mm, colour, 6 min. Distributed by ITE. |
| 30. <i>Le Petit Bonheur</i> | NFB, 1972. 16 mm, colour, 8 min. | 47. <i>The Violinist</i> | Sincinkin Ltd., 1972. 16 mm, colour, 25 min. Distributed by Marlin. |
| 31. <i>Pigs</i> | Dimension Films, 1967. 16 mm, colour, 11 min. Distributed by G. Watt. | 48. <i>What on Earth?</i> | NFB, 1966. 16 mm, colour, 9 min. |
| 32. <i>The Quiet Racket</i> | NFB, 1966. 16 mm, colour, 7 min. | | |
| 33. <i>Rainshower</i> | Dimension Films, 1965. 16 mm, colour, 14 min. Distributed by G. Watt. | | |

Legend

Cor.	Coronet Instructional Media Ltd. 200 Steelcase Road East Markham, Ontario L3R 1G2	McG-H	McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd. Film Division 330 Progress Avenue Scarborough, Ontario M1P 2Z5
EFD	Educational Film Distributors Ltd. 285 Lesmill Road Don Mills, Ontario M3B 2V1	NFB	National Film Board 1 Lombard Street Toronto, Ontario M5C 1J6
HRW	Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Ltd. Film Division 55 Horner Avenue Toronto, Ontario M8Z 4X6	VEC	Visual Education Centre 75 Horner Avenue Toronto, Ontario M8Z 4X5
ITE	International Tele-Film Enterprises Ltd. 47 Densley Avenue Toronto, Ontario M6M 5A8	G. Watt	Gordon Watt Films Inc. 4049 Sheppard Avenue East Agincourt, Ontario M1S 1S8
Marlin	Marlin Motion Pictures 47 Lakeshore Road East Mississauga, Ontario L5G 1C9	Viking	Viking Films Ltd. 525 Denison Street Unionville, Ontario L3R 1B8